

SIRIUS TELEVISION

Seven half-hour episode synopses

1. IPSEORAMA (*from Greek: "to see distantly"*)

Where have we been and where are we going? The future is coming. Inevitable and inexorable, **SIRIUS TELEVISION** finds the world is more concerned with the future than ever before. What kind of future are we leaving for our children? In his introduction, virtual host R.U. Sirius rants about skatepunk "bio-technology" -- the Millennium's version of the garage band. "Any mall-rat not toting a homegrown life-form along with them will be way un-cool."

- Film-maker **Beth B.** and neo-feminist art historian **Camille Paglia** create a work on the subject of "revisionist history".
- **A.S. Byatt** interviews **Stephen Hawking** on the future of the universe interpreted by **Terry Flaxton** of Britain's Triple Vision.
- **John Sanborn** reworks and illustrates a discussion between **Christopher Langton**, **Marvin Minsky**, **Steve Levy**, and **Rodney Brooks'** lab at MIT (Media Lab) about artificial life/artificial intelligences.
- **Todd Rundgren** and **Peter Gabriel** on the future of music.
- **Joe Rosen**, Stanford's amazing Nerve Chip Doctor, guided by avant-garde director **Richard Foreman**, looks into the future of medicine including neural implants and nanotechnology.
- **Yoichiro Kawaguchi** and **Umi Matsutoya** report on future fashion including space-time holographic fashion, wearable LCD screen clothes (DBS broadcast to your chest) and **Sarah Stara's** erotic ready to cyber-wear.

2. MEDIA

We're surrounded by it, defined by it, and there's going to be more of it every day. Information, data, pictures and sound. Can we make sense of it? R.U. Sirius' introduction shamelessly features his concept of a dadaist Multinational Media organization... Mondo Vanilli, starring R.U. Sirius.

- **Laurie Anderson** and **Bill Irwin** collaborate to take a look backward to reinterpret **Marshall McLuhan's** classic work "Understanding Media."
- French deconstructionists on speed. **Jean Baudrillard** espouses on the camcorder as interpreted by **Jean-Paul Fargier**; **Georges Bataille** discourses on the subject of trash TV, and new media as interpreted by France's **Jerome Lefdup**.
- **John Sanborn** directs "Meta-Media", a commissioned work about the proliferation of media, and how we have all become media junkies. With music by **John Zorn**.
- German media artists **Klaus Von Bruch** and **Valie Export** on Germany's "The Anti-Media Movement", a blending of New Media Manifestoes and the rising profile of Media Luddites.

- Media guerilla **Mark Dery** interviews various "low-tech" pirates and "media manipulators" in a music video by film-maker **Juan Downey** with original soundtrack by **Negativland**.

- **Eli Noyes** profiles the energetic and influential rag MONDO 2000.

3. FLESH

Why are we obsessed with it? And why can't we deal with it? R.U. Sirius meets Kinsey in his intro to this sensitive and eternal subject, as our virtual host gives his own survey of the sexual "state of the union." —

- Performance artist **Karen Finley** explores "selling with sex" as interpreted by videomaker **Lynn Hershman**.

- Sex=Death. How did we get here? **Peter Adair** and **Max Almy** profile ACT UP, investigate AIDS conspiracy theories, and examine the controversy surrounding the governments handling of the disease.

- **John Sanborn** reworks and illustrates as **Suzie Bright** interviews **Camille Paglia** on sexual politics.

- Eighteen-year-old gay "Pixel-cam" artist **Sadie Benning** turns her camera on the issue of rampant sexism in a commissioned piece.

- Writer **Kathy Acker** reports on **Fakir Mustifar** and the sub-world of the pierced and tattooed, as interpreted by **Robert Longo**.

- Performance artist/writer **Cintra Wilson** and ex-porn star **Annie Sprinkle** report on sexual identity and gender dysfunction with film-maker **Jennie Livingston**.

4. EMPOWERMENT

The year of the woman, the upsurge of Afro-american culture, weird science, the increasing consciousness of the gay world... the world is turning away from the straight white male (and a good thing, too)...and we had better change with it. R.U. Sirius' ranting introduction will be an essay on "How to Mutate and Take Over the World."

- Filmmaker **Marlon Riggs** examines New Jack culture; the music and politics of **Public Enemy**, **Ice-T**, **Ice Cube** and **Spike Lee**.

- **Skip Sweeney** spends some time with Mondo writer **St. Jude** exploring cooking with your mind's chemicals.

- Those darn conspiracies will never go away! **Jim Jarmusch** catches writer **Robert Anton Wilson** ("The Illuminatus Trilogy") interviewing **Ross Perot**.

- A look at how multi-cultural and so-called "special interest" politics are forcing the white male into the background. Performances by **Culture Clash**, the **Riot Grrrls**, **Pomo-Afro-Homo Theatre Group** interpreted by **Eli Noyes**.

- **Lee Felsenstein** ("Computer Power to the People") interviews **Chris Whittle** about The Electronic Democracy (electronic education, uplink townhalls & E-voting) as interpreted by **Brett Leonard** (LAWNMOWER MAN).

- This segment of **SIRIUS TELEVISION** is de-constructed to show how the desktop revolution and personal technology work.

5. FANTASY

Anything but reality. R.U. Sirius tries desperately to escape this mortal coil and explains why he lives in a total fantasy world. The most artistic of all the shows, this episode is almost entirely made up of commissions.

- Film-maker **Eli Noyes** captures **Penn & Teller** loosely interpreting their dreams.
- "The Man Who Never Dreams," an electronic short story by British writer **J.G. Ballard** and film-maker **Peter Greenaway**.
- Fantasy and reality, conflict and confusion: **David Byrne** interviews **David Lynch** (and vice versa) as interpreted by **John Waters**.
- Performance artist and writer **Ann Magnuson** teams up with film-maker **Mark Pellington** to find the surreal in the banal.
- Filmmaker/performance artist **Julia Heyward** and artist/writer **Jenny Holtzer** explore the collision of politics and fiction to examine who owns fantasy.
- A Dream State, automatic writing and ghosts; a collaboration between performance artist **Robert Ashley** and videomaker **John Sanborn**.


6. ENLIGHTENMENT

Is there such a thing as "the Truth," and is it ever possible to know it? Well, whatever the answer, the search for truth continues in the cyber-age, with new religions, techno-cults, new New Age fads, fashion and philosophy. R.U. Sirius, alone, knows the secret to life, and he's willing to divulge it...for a price.

- The TRUTH in science: an artwork about Chaos Theory and new quantum physics; a commission to **the Residents**, working with video artist **John Sanborn**.
- The TRUTH in a chip, a look inside the next generation of computers and the computer industry. **Alan Kay** interviews **Bill Gates**, **Steve Wozniak**, **Ted Nelson**; as interpreted by **Drew Takahashi**.
- The TRUTH found in alternative religions (such as the **Church of the Sub-Genius**); R.U. Sirius outlines the philosophy of this strange cult, music by **Bob Ostertag**.
- The TRUTH in our non-civilized past. The revival of neo-paganism featuring groups like **Discordian Hail Eros** as interpreted by **Eli Noyes**, with music by **Mr. Bungle**.
- The TRUTH is in 90's psychedelia, trip-meister **Terrence McKenna** interviewed by professional straight-man **Bill Moyers**, reworked by film-maker **Tony Oursler**.
- Just plain TRUTH. **P.J. O'Rourke** interviews truth-sayer and legend **Timothy Leary** as interpreted by "the George Washington of Video Art" **Nam June Paik**.

7. DEATH

The inevitable end. We shun it, flirt with it, can't deal with it and try to beat it... but death is always there. An episode of essays and investigations; new ways of thinking about death. Host R.U. Sirius, who as a virtual cartoon is immortal, guides



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<http://archive.org/details/sirius television00john>

us into his merger with the cyber-mind, and tells us what it's like to live forever... including fashion tips.

- "Death", an electronic short-story, written by **Nicholson Baker**, animated by **The Brothers Quay**.
- A visit with writer **Rudy Rucker** exploring his concept of trans-realism... storing all the data of our lives for retrieval and input to another body sometime in the future. Interpreted by **Eli Noyes**.
- A profile of destruction artist **Mark Pauline** of Survival Research Labs, whose performance works flirt with death and destruction, with music by **Glenn Branca** as filmed by **Scott Billingsley**.
- Suicide doctor and controversial physician **Dr. Kevorkian** interviewed by writer **William Burroughs**, as captured by **Paul Garrin**.
- Operatic avant-garde diva **Diamanda Galas** and John Sanborn collaborate on a music work based on the composer's "The Red Death" about AIDS.
- "Day of the Dead" videographer **Skip Blumberg** collaborates with choreographer **Bill T. Jones** on a work about death which surrounds us, and our inability to deal with it.
- A short speed-rap "suicide chic," written and performed by **Eric Bogosian**, filmed and interpreted by **Jim Jarmusch**.

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SIRIUS TELEVISION

Production Protocol

SIRIUS TELEVISION takes advantage of every-visual medium -- film, video and otherwise -- to realize its vision on the broadcast screen. From Hi-8 to Super 8, from Pixel-Vision to hi-def, from computer graphics to Etch-a-Sketch.

Stylistically, we will draw from this vast toolbox of digital tools to create new image logics and story structures:

- Multiple image screens (where more than one running picture appears over another, so that two stories can be told at once)
- Animated cartoons, or comic strips, will run along the edges of the screen, like in Mad Magazine.
- Text and animated graphics will appear concurrently to "frame" a story, much like "INTERVIEW" or "THE FACE" uses text to give the impact of a story the appropriate visual cue and punch.
- As with Monty Python, segments may be stopped abruptly for no apparent reason other than comic effect or to wake up the Couch Potato.
- A text irrelevant to the main screen "story" may be seen running underneath it.
- One whole show may have CCD security-camera footage running in mortise in the lower left-hand corner of the screen.
- Computer graphic "Flip books" will emerge in the corner of the frame, advancing and retreating as the show progresses.
- Electronic windows that "bore" through the entire show, will flash forward and backward through ancillary material, german but usually excluded (left on the cutting room floor) from standard TV shows.

In short, technically, **SIRIUS TELEVISION** takes advantage of all media -- the lower the cost and more available, the better. The idea is to produce a electronic grass-roots series. Stylistically, **SIRIUS TELEVISION** will be ground-breaking. Fresh, futurist, enlightening, entertaining.

SIRIUS TELEVISION

Target Audience

SIRIUS TELEVISION takes dead aim at the audience who feels left out by much of public television's programming: the young, the forward thinking urban sophisticate, the visually adventurous, everyone with a sense of humor. Where do these people go when they watch television? The conventional networks? Maybe for entertainment, but when it comes to reality programming, it's hard to imagine a college audience tuning to "20/20." There's Fox, but what programs do they have to inform the sophisticated thirty-year old about the Cutting Edge that isn't stuffy or condescending or downright embarrassing? Sure, there are those who flip to MTV. But programming there merely tantalizes the eyes and leaves the mind unnourished. **SIRIUS TELEVISION** fills the gap that Rolling Stone plugged in the print world during its hey day. It caters to those who are in the know, and those who want to be.

SIRIUS TELEVISION is inclusive. It isn't snobby. We're not after a narrow demographic populated by the tragically hip. It's not just for 18 to 24-year olds. It's not just for rich white folk. It's not just for gays or Latinos or women or children or AIDS victims or for computer hackers. It's not for any of them because it's for *all* of them. This show is about exploration of our culture, our future, our technology...our selves. It's about the most exciting thing in the world: what's next.

The audience for that is *anybody*. So you might say, basically, we cater to that specialized audience who is tired of being bored.

We do our job right and **SIRIUS TELEVISION** will be a half-hour of electronic fly paper. Channer surfers searching for new forms and meaty content will be sucked in by their eyeballs and come back week after week because their brain (and all their pals) will tell them to.

SIRIUS TELEVISION will be *the thing* to watch. Period.

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SIRIUS TELEVISION and the ITVS FOCUSED PROGRAMMING MANDATE

1. By its very definition, **SIRIUS TELEVISION** is all about "rethinking television and exploring new ways of using it."

- The artists and materials we will tap for the series are being chosen precisely *because* their work re-defines television and its uses for the 21st Century.
- As stated in our proposal, "Possibly the only constant for [**SIRIUS TELEVISION**] will be a healthy disregard for the medium of television and its standard conventions." It's very existence will "invite viewers to reflect" on tv itself.
- The series is all about exploration of new forms and visual languages
- We sincerely hope **SIRIUS TELEVISION** will serve as a prototype to encourage equally challenging programming

2. **SIRIUS TELEVISION** is the answer to unmet programming needs. We need television that incites and informs about alternative possibilities.

- Not only will we consult with independent producers, community leaders, critics, etc. -- we will be commissioning many of them to provide material for the series.
- This is a truly "independent" series, for without the combined talent and resources of the international talent pool, there *is* no **SIRIUS TELEVISION**. Noyes and Sanborn, among others, through their extensive contacts, will comb the art world for the ultimate combination of independents to "realize the series."

3. Exploring and creating new and interactive relationships with our audience is the ultimate goal. **SIRIUS TELEVISION** doesn't want an audience of couch potatoes. The series is a stimulus to action and further exploration.

- We will incorporate the communities of artists, futurists, writers and musicians to produce the show.
- No doubt, the series will serve as the electronic town hall for futurists and artists to put their feet up on the "potbelly Toaster" and exchange ideas.
- New viewers -- mainly the young and the adventurous -- will flock to the show, viewers who have been turned off by the status quo of PBS.
- As for a life beyond programming, both R.U. Sirius and the producers have a profound desire to build an interactive component (CD-ROM, CD-I) out of the series. After all, this series *is* about the future of media.
- Not only do we want to develop an "awareness" of independent production, we want to *develop* independent production. Period. Once done, the community we serve -- the audience at large -- will be fully served with enriching entertainment and ideas.

4. At the risk of being redundant, **SIRIUS TELEVISION** could not exist without the cooperation of independent producers and artists. The process of creating a series will forge a truly new kind of working relationship among them that will result in a unique network of artists and product.

- The series will be their shared challenge. By designing an organized production model that will produce the shows on time and on schedule, we will hopefully provide a sense of efficient and effective networking.

- By commissioning various on-going elements of the series to various independents, they will form small teams and cooperatives to produce the material. It will result in the most effective kind of mentor workshop -- learning by doing.

- If **SIRIUS TELEVISION** is going to break the mold, we are going to have to define the new order. That will take discussion, exchange and critical debate with the non-mainstream artist community.

By its very nature and without any contrivance, **SIRIUS TELEVISION** fulfills every objective of ITVS and the Focused Programming initiatives. It is a series that cries out to be made.

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John Sanborn - Co-Producer

Since 1978, media artist John Sanborn has been world renowned for his innovative, experimental, and popular creations in the field of video art. His work includes collaborations with Robert Ashley, Twyla Tharp, Todd Rundgren, Dean Winkler, Bill T. Jones, The Residents, John Zorn, SONY & Ryuichi Sakamoto, Molissa Fenley, Michael Nesmith, Lee Breuer and Bob Telson, Charles Moulton, David Van Tieghem, David Gordon, Philip Glass, and Marty Perillo (his partner in Sanborn, Perillo & Co.).

He has received grants from The Rockefeller Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council for the Arts, and Ars Electronica, in Austria. He was an Artist-in-Residence at the television Laboratory at WNET/13 from 1977-1984, and his ongoing search for clues to the secret of "visual humming" continues to this day.

Sanborn's work straddles the media worlds of art and commerce. He is both an accomplished artist with an eye for the accessible, and a skilled director able to create the perfect metaphor for a commercial venture.

Sanborn has directed music/videos for such artists as Nile Rodgers, Grace Jones, King Crimson, Van Halen and the "Dirty Dancing" soundtracks. He has also directed commercials through Broadcast Arts (New York) for numerous clients including the on-air look for the Disney Channel called "Quackertown"; Donald Duck's hometown.

Sanborn has created work for six seasons of the acclaimed PBS series "Alive From Off Center" including the half-hour project "Words On Fire". Other unusual venues for Sanborn's art have included the NHK-TV "Media Art Museum" a three day exhibition broadcast live over Japanese satellite television.

In the worlds of "high technology" Sanborn created several works in High Definition Television, including the ground breaking and award-winning work called "Infinite Escher" which tells the story of a young boy (Sean Ono Lennon) and his wild imagination, which comes alive taking the form of the works of M.C. Escher.

In 1991 he joined forces with musician/composer/producer Todd Rundgren to form NUtopia, with New Trek (inventors of the "Video Toaster") to further the aesthetics of "desktop video" and create new works in the worlds of both art and commerce. Sanborn is also working with Canter technology, a multi-media production group, to produce a series of interactive entertainment works.

His television work has been broadcast globally and is available in home video via a Pioneer Laserdisc collection called "The World of John Sanborn" as well as the multi-format issue of "Infinite Escher", released by Sony software; and in a Voyager Press laserdisc release containing his work.

He currently lives in Berkeley, California, with his wife, Sarah Cahill.

Eli Noyes - Co-Producer

Academy Award nominee Eli Noyes is perhaps best known for the comedic flair he brings to his art, including Monitor and Ace Award winning projects for television, and acclaimed commercials for Reebok and Wild Cherry Pepsi. But Eli, who began his career at the side of famed designer Charles Eames, took an early detour into the world of documentaries.

During his senior year at Harvard, Eli made a short animated film, CLAY: OR THE ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES, which earned him an Academy Award nomination in 1965. The following year, Eli entered the Graduate School of Design at Harvard, but left to join the Peace Corps. He served two years in Tanzania, teaching and illustrating a guidebook to the Serengeti National Park, and making a 16mm film in Swahili.

After returning to New York he formed Cyclops Films to produce documentaries, including THIS IS THE HOME OF LEVANT GRAHAM, and a series of films for SESAME STREET.

In 1978, Cyclops disbanded, and Noyes Productions was founded. Eli continued to work with SESAME STREET and pursued experiments in video for which he was awarded grants from the American Film Institute and the Experimental Laboratory at WNET, among others. Eli also created films under contract to THE LEARNING CORPORATION OF AMERICA, adapting children's books for film.

When cable programming began to boom in 1977, Eli designed and directed the opening graphics for Nickelodeon's PINWHEEL, a program produced for pre-schoolers. Soon after, agency Fred/Alan approached Eli about creating animated graphics for both Nickelodeon and MTV.

During the same period, Eli collaborated with producer Kit Laybourne on an HBO pilot, BRAIN GAMES. Thus, the firm of Noyes & Laybourne was formed.

Noyes & Laybourne produced award-winning children's programming for Scholastic/Lorimar, Nickelodeon and HBO. It designed and produced commercials, and created graphic ID's and show titles for PBS, HBO, Westinghouse Broadcasting, and MTV. In 1988, Eli won a CLIO for his work as director of a NICK AT NITE ID package.

In 1989, Noyes & Laybourne merged with San Francisco-based Colossal Pictures, with Eli serving as creative director and principal. During that time, Eli worked on numerous commercial and broadcast ID's for clients such as Burger King, Nikon, General Foods, HBO and Nickelodeon. In addition, he directed portions of the provocative MTV prime-time series, LIQUID TELEVISION. Continuing in television long form, Eli is creative director of the Ace Award-winning series on Nickelodeon, EUREKA'S CASTLE.

Eli has recently moved, with his family, to San Francisco to direct long and short form projects.

R.U. Sirius - Writer/Host (Committed to project)

R.U. Sirius is co-founder and former Editor-In-Chief of MONDO 2000, the popular and influential "New Edge" cyberpunk magazine and co-author of the HarperCollins book "MONDO 2000: A User's Guide to the New Edge." A former Yippie! activist and punk rock singer, Sirius is a major public spokesperson for the cyberpunk trend, speaking frequently at public events and in print, radio, and television on futuristic subjects ranging from virtual reality to nanotechnology.

Skip Sweeney - Editor (Committed to project)

Skip Sweeney, an award-winning video artist, began working with video in 1967 and in 1970 founded Video Free America, a media arts organization, to collaborate with artists, performers and mediamakers to produce work which reflects a broad spectrum of ideas and styles. Today, Video Free America continues to evolve as a laboratory for innovative television, bringing together new video technologies and the artists who can use them. Skip is best known for two deeply personal experimental television works, "My Father Sold Studebakers" and "My Mother Married Wilbur Stump." Both works won awards in various festivals and competitions and have been across the USA on PBS.

Brad deGraf - Computer Guru (Committed to project)

As one of the leading innovators in the uses of computer graphics for the entertainment industry, Brad deGraf created the first computer generated character and first uses of computer animation in theme park attractions. His background includes computer graphics for features (THE LAST STARFIGHTER, STAR TREK V, ROBOCOP 2) and large public space entertainments, as well as developmental proprietary technology for interactive educational software, real-time computer-generated character animation and 3D computer graphics. His ideas have been directly applied to real storytelling products, using new animation techniques like 3D virtual worlds and digital characters.

CONSULTANTS

Japhet Asher, Executive Producer **Liquid Television** (Animated Variety Show)

Joe Kwong, Executive Producer **Take 5** (Arts Magazine)

Ellen Schneider, Executive Producer **P.O.V.** (Documentary Series)

POTENTIAL COLLABORATORS

Peter Adair

Max Almy

Beth B.

Cecile Babiole

Sadie Benning

Dara Birnbaum

Skip Blumberg

Colossal Pictures

Juan Downey

Jean-Paul Fargier

Jeanne Finley

Terry Flaxton

Paul Garrin

Lynn Hershman

Julia Heyward

Yoichiro Kawaguchi

Sandra Kogut

Jerome Lefdup

Jim Ludke

Tony Oursler

Nam June Paik

Mark Pellington

Quay Brothers

Eve Ramboz

The Residents

Marlon Riggs

Todd Rundgren

Drew Takahashi

Video Free America

Klaus Von Bruch

Cintra Wilson

SIRIUS TELEVISION

Anticipated Production Schedule

(42 Week Schedule)

PRE-PRODUCTION

- 8 Weeks - Research, Development of Ideas, Writing, Acquisitions Review
- 6 Weeks - Shoot Preparation

PRODUCTION

- 7 Weeks - Shoot, On-going Acquisitions Review

POST-PRODUCTION

- 21 Weeks - Off-line and On-line Editing, Computer Imaging and Graphics, Mix

